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the bush. Here it is not always convenient to lie down, so a standing position is adopted, the man behind the woman who bends her body forward. I have two drawings, both done by young men, showing couples in this position, and on one occasion when I observed children playing at copulation it was done thus.

The bush is the favourite place for love-making. The taro garden is frequently chosen by husband and wife; clandestine lovers prefer the uncleared bush. This preference is the basis of some of the stock insults current among these people. A person of either sex who is angry with a woman will say to her: '*Wanits i ratsu.*' 'You copulate in the bush', or '*Giug i ratsu.*' 'You conceive in the bush.' (These are indicatives, not imperatives.)[1]

As far as I know, there are no periods of special licence, nor is there any occasion on which extra-marital intercourse is either enjoined or sanctioned with ritual significance, unless we include the punishment of a woman in this manner for breaking taboos connected with the boys' puberty rites (see Chap. VI).

Sexual abstinence is imposed upon certain individuals under special circumstances, but I do not know of any time when the prohibition is general. A woman must refrain from intercourse for some time after the birth of a child. The young men who act as sponsors (*amro*) to the adolescent boys wearing the *upi* must remain continent during certain stages of the puberty rites. Abstinence during the previous night is essential if a man wishes to succeed in bonito fishing, but there are 'medicines' whereby the result of breaking this taboo may be circumvented.

PROSTITUTION

I learned of nothing that could be described as prostitution occurring among these people, as is perhaps to be expected in a community where a partner can be obtained without difficulty. Presents of tobacco, betel, &c., will sometimes pass between lovers, but these are signs of preference, not payment for services rendered. In most villages there are some women who are known to be liberal with their favours, usually these are young wives whose husbands are away working as indentured labourers.

[1] Other stock insults are concerned with incestuous relationships and with faeces, just as in other parts of Melanesia. Typical examples are '*No en sas a tsis a tsinanau!*' 'Go eat your mother's faeces!' '*Tetop tsinan!*' 'Copulate with your mother!'

844 digging a hole near the inner side wall of the hut. Into this she threw the afterbirth. The piece of areca-palm fibre on which it had been thrown after the cord was cut was then washed, and the water allowed to drip into the hole. Manēv then stood astride the hole, and water was poured over her, so that the blood from her genitals was washed into the hole. She then filled in the hole, and stood by watching what was being done to the child. After the water had been poured over it the grandmother handed the baby to its mother, who put it to her breast. It made an attempt to suck, but after a minute or two Sanasi took it away again, and renewed her attempts to make it cry, which it did still rather feebly.

844 824 Manēv then took the log she had been sitting on during the labour, and heated it in the fire without letting it burn. Then she applied it to her vulva, which was still bleeding. Presently she was given a handful of the large leaves of two plants, called *kō* and *wapatsūn*, which she held one by one in the smoke of the fire until they were hot, and then pressed to her abdomen. This was done to make the blood run out quickly and stop the pain. Then she lay down on a plank-bed near the fire.

The grandmother moulded the child's head with the palm of her hand, either bare or holding a heated leaf flat against her palm, which she pressed against the child's head. The back and sides of the head were pressed gently upwards, and the same kind of pressure was then given to the forehead. The nose was pinched to give it a bridge, and the cheeks pu[illegible] in. Eventually the child was laid on a woman's hood on the plank-bed beside its mother. It was soon suckling freely. It was given wads of taro, chewed first by its mother, on the same day.

142 It was a male child, and quite large. Its skin was of a colour difficult to describe, like a sallow white person's with a tinge of purple. The hut was too dark to take a 'colour top' reading. The nipples were much darker than the surrounding area, and were nearly black, as were also its penis and scrotum. There was no 'blue spot'. The hair was fairly thick, but not so thick as that of other children I saw at birth, neither was it so black. Its ends had a tendency to curl.

• 846 Mother and child spent the rest of that day, and the next three days, inside the hut, lying most of the time on the plank-bed near the fire. Patchip, the child's father, was not allowed to see his son for the first three days. He was obliged to remain in seclusion in

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the other hut, and was forbidden to do any work and especially strictly forbidden to handle a knife, axe, or other sharp instrument. If he did so, it is thought that the child would die. This prohibition applies to the mother also. Further, neither father nor mother might wash themselves, nor eat pig, fish, or opossum, which means that they were confined to a vegetarian diet. Patchip's mother cooked the food for them both.

On the morning of the fourth day (Aug. 29), Patchip took some leaves of the plant called *majiŋir*, a green leaf and a dry one, rubbed them in his hands, and squeezed them into a *kapi* shell. A little water was added, and taking the shell he went into the hut to make the acquaintance of his first-born, and to give him this 'medicine' to make him grow strong. He held the shell to the child's mouth. Afterwards, the leaves were carefully thrown away into the bush, but the shell which had been used to hold the mixture was carefully preserved in the hut. Medicine and other liquids will be given to the child in it during babyhood.

Patchip was anxious to perform on this day the ceremony removing the taboos under which he laboured, but the old women of the village said it was too soon, and persuaded him to defer it for a little while longer. He might now walk about the village, but no farther.

On the fifth day the child was washed in fresh water inside the hut. Its umbilical cord came off, and was preserved in a coco-nut shell containing lime for chewing with areca-nut, where it will remain until the child is grown up. The father and mother both went and washed in the sea. The child was not yet allowed to be taken outside the hut.

On the morning of the sixth day Patchip went into the hut carrying a large bush knife. With this he made several slashes at the child as it lay in its mother's arms, pretending to cut its head, limbs, and abdomen. This removed the taboo on holding a sharp instrument, and Patchip was then free to go to work, his period of couvade being over. Manēv was also allowed to go to the taro garden, but did not do so that day.

After this mother and child took up the ordinary course of their lives. The child was thriving when I left five weeks later.

A NATIVE WOMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF A BIRTH

The Kurtatchi women followed the course of Manēv's pregnancy with great interest, asking eagerly for details of its progress when

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throw away the leaves into the sea, where the tide will carry them away. We get a green coco-nut, we make a drink for her. (The word used implies a cooked drink, perhaps 'soup' would be a fair translation.)

'The father of the child is forbidden to eat fish, pig, and opossum. He is forbidden intercourse with the mother of the child, they are forbidden to each other. The mother of the child is angry and strikes its father (if he tries to have intercourse with her). He goes to another woman (wife) in another house.

'Sometimes the child remains inside its mother's belly. Then we make *poti*. We say: "What is the matter with the child, that it stays inside, it does not fall down." Another woman is fetched, to help. Soup is made of green coco-nuts for the mother. She is afraid because the child remains inside her belly.

'Now another woman gives birth, and something goes wrong, and she dies. Or the child dies in the belly of its mother. The women ask: "What about this child?" The mother says: "I am still carrying this child." It is dead in its mother's belly. We put a hand into its mother's genitals and pull out the child, then the mother recovers, and the child alone dies.'

COMPLICATIONS OF CHILD-BIRTH

While listening to this narrative I was struck with the emphasis which was laid on the pain suffered by the parturient, and the possibility of complications arising followed by death of mother or child or both. It has so often been supposed that child-birth in the case of primitive people is easy and relatively painless. It seems to me that this is by no means general. The woman whose first delivery has been described in this chapter certainly appeared to suffer as much as, if not more than, many primiparae among ourselves, and it is very clear both from the stress laid on pain and fear in the account given by Matĕv, and from remarks of other women, that among these people at any rate, child-birth is not such a simple affair as we have been led to believe. On another occasion a woman gave birth to a dead child after forty-eight hours of agony. The attendant women became very anxious after twenty-four hours had elapsed, but they could do nothing beyond massage and the administration of various concoctions of leaves and betel. I was told that there had been a woman at Kurtatchi, the grandmother of a boy still living there, who used to put her hand into

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844 enter it for three days after the birth of the child, and other men only after he has done so. But the latter part of this prohibition is not always strictly observed.

844 824 There are a number of medicines which are used to hasten a delivery if the women who are watching think it is unduly protracted. The following is typical:

Pupūna (*Pteris tripartita* Sw.)

Take some of the leaves, heat them, and rub them on the woman's abdomen. Squeeze the sap into water and give it to her to drink.

The use of other plants for the same purpose has been described in the account of the birth of Manēv's child. One more may be mentioned because it seems to be comparable with our use of an anodyne:

Wanōnō (*Erythrina*, 'the coral tree').

When the woman feels that the pains are very severe, rub the leaves between your hands, mix them with water, and give the water to her to drink; it will lessen the pain.

A number of other plants which may be given to facilitate delivery could not be identified from my specimens. They are used in similar fashion to those above described, or in some cases are chewed with the betel-mixture and rubbed on the woman's abdomen. To the account of the use of one of these my informant added: 'If when the plant is pulled up it is found to have a forked root, the woman is carrying twins.'

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RESTRICTIONS ON SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

843 There is no taboo on sexual intercourse right up to the time of child-birth, but in practice it is discontinued towards the end of the pregnancy, though the husband may continue to occupy the same hut until the pains begin.

• 846 After the birth, intercourse with the mother is strictly interdicted. The duration of this period of abstinence was described to me in various ways: 'Until the child can run about.' 'Until the child begins to talk.' The criterion most frequently cited was: 'Until the child has yaws.' This tropical skin disease falls to the lot of every child, usually between one and two or three years of age. I estimate that, in general, intercourse is not resumed until the child is at least two years old. There is no taboo on the husband's

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relations with other women, and since many men have more than one wife, and in any case opportunities for extra-marital intercourse are not lacking, this custom, of such obvious benefit to the mother, does not impose continence upon the male. But the decline in polygamy now conduces to an increasing disregard of this rule. 846

Failing to observe the taboo is supposed to bring ill-health to the child. An obviously sickly baby will be taken as an indication that its parents have been indulging in sexual intercourse during the prohibited period. Some do so in secret, and give the child a concoction of leaves to drink which is supposed to counteract the ill effects of the act. But in general, the women strongly resent any attempt on the part of their husbands to approach them during this prohibited period. A case occurred at Kurtatchi, some time before my arrival, of a man who divorced his wife for refusing him access at a time she considered too soon after the birth of their child. The sentiment of the village was against him, and he never succeeded in obtaining another wife. The following story from my collection also illustrates this point. It was told me as typical of what used to happen in the olden days: [753] [586]

There was a man whose wife had a child. The man asked his wife to go to the bush with him. The woman said: 'No, I don't want to.' The man said: 'Now come, you and I will have coitus in the bush.' The woman said: 'No, I don't want to, I am thinking of the child. I don't want the child to be hurt.' The man pressed her. He said: 'The child is not little, he is a big child now.' The woman said: 'No, I don't want people to laugh at me because my child is sickly.' The man was angry, he went alone to the bush, he climbed a *tfiniv* tree (tall slender tree from the trunk of which dug-out canoes are made). He jumped down head-first, he fell to the ground, and his neck was broken and he died. The woman went to look for her husband, she found him dead. She wailed, and said: 'Alas for my husband, he has killed himself. By and by I shall get another husband.' [824] [762]

It used to be looked upon as so impossible that the taboo on sexual intercourse should be broken, that if a woman became pregnant again during the prohibited period it was said that she had taken a banana and 'made the child come up' with it. 'Face-saving' seems to be popular with the Melanesian, but the method is interesting because of the belief, referred in an earlier part of this chapter, that penetration by means of a banana can cause pregnancy. 846 842

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CUSTOMS CONCERNING FOOD

843 262 During pregnancy a woman may not eat the megapode (*iowa*) nor the fish called *turō*. Her husband should also observe this rule. No reason was given for this taboo. The woman must also abstain from a sea-creature called *awaian*, which is described as like a little snake, and living among the stones in the sea. This taboo would appear to have arisen for a reason like that which forbids a pregnant Trobriand woman to eat certain kinds of fish: 'Just as it is difficult to haul these fish out of their hiding-places, so the baby would not easily be brought forth.' (Malinowski, 1929, p. 193.) A pregnant 843 262 825 woman must on no account eat a certain frog called *toktok*, which frequents banana palms. It has unusually long legs, and it is thought that if she eats it her child will have legs of abnormal length.[1] Another kind of frog, *kakō*, which lives in pools in the bush, is specially recommended; if she eats it her child will be large and the period of pregnancy pass easily.

844 262 While labour is in progress the husband must abstain from food of any kind. The woman's mother, whether present at the confinement or not, must abstain from eating pig.

846 262 After the birth, for an indeterminate period ('while the baby is very small'), the parents may not eat pig, fish, opossum, shell-fish, or barringtonia fruit. Why the last-named should be included my informants did not know. The effect of the other prohibitions is to confine the parents to a vegetarian diet; this is thought to be of [276 824] advantage to the child. The mother is subjected to further restrictions. She must chew with her areca-nut only the leaf of the betel-pepper, not touching the catkin-like fruit, which is much preferred in the ordinary way. The reason given for this change is that the fruit is stronger than the leaf, and might harm the mother's milk. The nursing mother must also abstain from bananas and canarium almonds. While awaiting Manēv's confinement I was frequently given presents of both these things, which I shared with the expectant mother, to her great enjoyment, but her friend, Ema, who was constantly with us, would never accept any, saying that she was forbidden to eat them because she had a suckling child.

The mother's first meal after her confinement is the occasion of peculiar care. It consists of soup (*siro*), i.e. the water in which the

[1] Little girls are taught by their mothers to avoid this creature. Any unmarried person who eats it will not find favour with the opposite sex.

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taro has been cooked, and taro which has been boiled, not roasted in the embers. The taro for this meal, which must, in consequence of the prohibitions above mentioned, be eaten without its usual relish of fish or flesh, is brought home wrapped up in leaves, so that it is never exposed to view in the open air. The reason given for this precaution is that if it were so exposed, Manu, the big brown eagle, might see it, in which case the child would die. It will be remembered that Manu is the most important totem among these people, but the precaution is taken irrespective of the clan to which the child belongs. Manu appears to be regarded in this connexion as a being of whom the people are afraid, and who has power to harm the new member of the community. The importance of this first meal is further emphasized by the fact that the baby's mother's father, if available, is considered the appropriate person to go and fetch the taro, a task which under ordinary circumstances is never performed by a man. It is brought into the hut by the front or men's entrance (*tagoan*), instead of, as would happen in the usual course of things, by the women's entrance (*babots*).

COUVADE

As soon as the expectant mother feels the pains beginning, her husband must stop working, and remain indoors, not in the hut where his wife is confined, but in that of another of his wives, or of a neighbour. He must spend his time in sitting idle or dozing, and must on no account carry, or even lift, anything heavy, or touch a knife, axe, or any sharp or pointed instrument. To do the former would injure the child, the latter would cause it to die. This continues for three days. On the fourth day he may go into the hut and see his child. After this he is allowed to walk about the village, but must not go outside it. He must still refrain from working. On the fifth day he goes, with his wife, and washes in the sea; these are his first ablutions since the child was born. Then he may take an axe or a knife and go into the hut and pretend to cut the child; this removes the taboo on his use of sharp instruments, and he may now resume his usual activities. In the case of the child whose birth is described in the previous pages, this cutting was not done till the morning of the sixth day, but in discussions on the subject the fifth day was always stated as the appropriate time. It would appear, therefore, that five days is the minimum for the observance of couvade.

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The reason given for this practice was that as the father had 'made the child come up', he was responsible, as well as the mother, for its well-being during birth and for the first few days of its life, and that these precautions were taken to ensure this. The death of a two-days'-old child at Kurtatchi was attributed by all to the fact that the father, a young man of 'advanced' views, had refused to keep the couvade rules. The custom is a clear acknowledgement of responsibility for the child on the part of the father. There is no couvade for a child born as the result of extra-marital intercourse.

TREATMENT OF NEW-BORN CHILD

The umbilical cord (*busō*) is never severed until the afterbirth has been expelled. If the expulsion of the afterbirth is delayed overlong, the root of the plant *pupuna* is brought, and chewed with the betel-mixture, the resulting mass is spat out and rubbed on to the big toe of one of the assistant women. She then pushes with her toe on the abdomen of the parturient, at the level of her umbilicus. They say this loosens the placenta and causes it to be expelled.

The child is left lying, still attached to the placenta, on the piece of fibre on to which it was expelled, until it shows signs of life. All the women look on anxiously, but no one touches it as long as it remains motionless. It seems probable that this custom may sometimes lead to the death of a child who might have been saved had prompt measures been taken. As soon as the slightest movement is perceived the cord is cut. The mother herself, if she is able, is considered the proper person to do this. It should be measured to the child's knee, and cut at that level; they say that if it is cut closer to the child's body the umbilicus will swell up and be painful, and will afterwards project. (Very many children show signs of umbilical hernia.) The cut end is not treated in any way. It is left attached to the child until it drops off naturally. In some cases which came under my observation, this seemed to occur much sooner than would be expected, for instance on the second day after birth. It is preserved in the lime-pot which contains the mother's supply of powdered lime for chewing with areca-nut. There it will remain till the child is grown up, unless the child dies, when it will be taken out and buried in the house. It is usually allowed to remain in the lime-pot, covered by the powder, indefinitely, unless some one finds it by accident, and asks: 'Aren't you going to throw away

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this cord now that the child is big?' If the grown child finds it himself, he will ask his mother to throw it away. If it were thrown away while the child is still small, he would become ill. This is explained on the grounds that some evilly-disposed person might find it and make bad medicine with it against the child. I have often been shown such bits of shrivelled cord, covered with lime-powder, lying in the bottom of these receptacles, and been told to which child each had belonged. The mother will not sell or part with a lime-pot containing her child's cord, for fear it might fall into the hands of some one who would bring disaster on the child.

The placenta (*pem* or *piom*) is thrown on to a piece of areca-nut fibre and is shortly afterwards buried in the house, together with the membranes (*sōsō*). A fire is made over the filled-in hole. If the placenta were thrown away into the bush some one might get hold of it and 'make poison' to kill the mother. It is noteworthy that the evil effects of carelessness with regard to the umbilical cord are thought to react on the child, those due to carelessness in the treatment of the placenta, on its mother.

If the child is born dead, the cord is not severed, but the body, with the placenta still attached, is buried in the house, near one of the side-walls. An early miscarriage, described as 'child not enough yet', is buried under the woman's bed.

Immediately the cord has been severed, the baby is taken up and all means are used to make it cry lustily. As soon as its cry satisfies the attendant women, it is put to the breast. When it has proved that it is able to suck, it is taken away again, and its head and face are moulded by one of the attendant women, by pressure exerted at the back, sides, and forehead. This procedure is called *totobin*. They like the back and sides of the head to rise perpendicularly, without bulging. In later life their method of trimming the hair is also designed to emphasize this shape, which is also imitated in their ceremonial figures. The nose of the infant is pinched, so that it will not be too flat. Flat noses are much disliked, and if extreme become objects of ridicule. The mother continues this moulding and pinching at intervals, whenever she happens to think about it. As far as my personal observation goes, I do not think she does it often enough, or with enough persistent pressure, actually to cause any alteration in the shape of the child's head such as might be described as artificial deformation. No extraneous aids, such as

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bandages or a cradle-board, are employed to accentuate the effect. There are no cradles; if it is required to put the baby down it is laid on a woman's hood on the ground, but this is not often done, and I do not think it lies on its back sufficiently to cause any occipital flattening.

The child receives only the most superficial cleansing for the first five days. Then it is thoroughly washed in fresh water. It may then be taken outside the hut, but its mother is careful to keep it out of the sun. There is a tendency on the part of young mothers nowadays to shorten the period of seclusion in the hut, which they must share with the child, but the old women do not countenance this breach of rule if they can help it. If the child is *tumaun*, i.e. if its mother is a woman of rank, the period of seclusion must be extended to ten days.

LACTATION

In the absence of any animal whose milk can be utilized, the infant is entirely dependent upon its mother for this essential of its diet. In cases of the mother's inability to feed the infant or inability on the part of the infant to suckle, it usually dies. I did not hear of any cases in which the infant of a living woman was suckled by some one else, but instances are known to me where the sister of a woman who had died was feeding the dead woman's baby, having lost her own.

Babies are not passed round and suckled by different women at various times, as has been reported from other regions. While the child is small the mother keeps it with her constantly, taking it with her when she goes to the taro garden or to search for shell-fish on the reef. When it is a little older it may be left at home in charge of a small girl or another woman, but the mother will return to feed it. There is no attempt at regularity of feeding; it is generally offered the breast if it cries much. Some women have very pendulous breasts, but I have not seen any long enough to be thrown over the shoulder to a child carried on the back. I have often seen a woman bend down with her hands on her knees so that a child standing beside her could suck.

Women whose children die during the lactation period frequently suffer considerable pain from the retention of the milk. In the cases which came under my personal observation, nothing was done to relieve this, but in my collection of 'prescriptions'

535 The Buka dance or *guma* is an uninteresting spectacle. Unlike other Melanesian dances there is very little action and the [535] accompanying singing is but a constant repetition of "O-a-o-a" in as many keys as the human voice is capable of rendering. The men walk slowly around in a circle while the women, standing some ten yards away, advance to the edge of the circle from time to time and in pairs bend their bodies backwards and forwards, or in threes and fours skip sideways to and fro. From a distance the singing is often harmonious, but when heard at close quarters it is both ear-splitting and appalling to a musical listener.

[534] 202 The singing is accompanied by the beating of the hollowed-out wooden drums (*tui*) with series of short staccato raps from the soft-nosed beaters. These *tui* can be heard for many miles when weather conditions are favourable and are used extensively for signalling. Some of the Buka districts have elaborate *tui* codes, and are able to send detailed messages from village to village. Among the more [763] simplified signals is that denoting a death and is made by ten long beats, pause, three short, pause, three short, pause, five short, pause, five short, pause, and ten long. When a man is annoyed over something (his wife has failed to cook the taro, or a pig has died) and he wishes to "tell the world" he raps out ten long beats, a pause, then another ten long beats. The arrival of a stranger in a village is denoted by three long beats, pause, followed by three series of seven short beats interspersed with pauses. The general call to assemble in a village is three series of three shorts and one long beat.

302 The men usually wear their hair long and combed upright. [346] The hair of a woman is close-cropped, except when she has given birth to a child and then it is allowed to grow long until the child is able to crawl about. The women wear a hood made from pandanus 291 leaves sewn horizontally together, with every other leaf dyed red 386 with the root of a bush. This custom is to prevent certain of their male relatives from seeing their hair, which is taboo. A loin cloth 291 of red or coloured print serves as the general garment for both sexes. 177 A few years ago the women wore a small grass *tahu*, and in former days the men wore no covering.